

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO AMEMBASSY SANA NIACT IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JIDDA 4834

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS FROM TWINAM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, MASS, YE, YS
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON VISIT TO YAR

1. MOOD: IN OVER FOUR HOURS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH YAR LEADERS JULY 27-28 I FOUND THEM TRYING HARD TO CONVEY IMPRESSION OF CALM DETERMINATION TO PRESS ON WITH BUILDING, AND DEFENDING, THE COUNTRY. BENEATH THE BRAVE FRONT THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY EXTREMELY WORRIED, ABOUT THEIR CHANCES FOR FORGING A VIABLE NEW REGIME AND ABOUT THE SOVIET THREAT EMANATING FROM ADEN. THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER PDRY TERRORISM AGAINST YAR OBVIOUSLY IS HEAVY ON THEIR MINDS, AND THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO FIND RELIEF IN THE PRESENT DISARRAY IN PDRY BECAUSE THEY DESCRIBE THE SITUATION THERE, AND WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE US SEE IT, AS CONSOLIDATION OF THE SOVIET GRIP ON SOUTH YEMEN.

2. WHAT YAR WANTS: COUNCIL CHAIRMAN AND PRIME MINISTER MADE QUITE CLEAR YAR'S DESPERATE SENSE OF NEED FOR US AND SAUDI SUPPORT. THEY OBVIOUSLY CONSIDER OUR SENDING SOMEONE TO SANA WITH PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF CONDOLENCES AND SUPPORT A VERY SIGNIFICANT

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SYMBOL OF US WILLINGNESS TO STAND BY YAR IN TIME OF NEED, AND THUS I FEEL MY VISIT MADE REAL INITIAL CONTRIBUTION TO BUCKING UP YAR LEADERSHIP. IN MY TALKS I EMPHASIZED MY IMPRESSION OF INTENSITY OF SAUDI CONCERN FOR WELFARE OF NORTH YEMEN, AND I BELIEVE THIS WAS FULLY NOTED AND HELPED. CHAIRMAN ARASHI IN PARTICULAR, HOWEVER, MADE IT ABUNDANTLY

CLEAR TO ME THAT YAR NEEDS FROM US AND FROM SAUDIS MORE THAN MERE WORDS AND IS LOOKING FOR CONCRETE MANIFESTATIONS OF US-SUADI WILLINGNESS TO BACK YAR. (OF COURSE, AS ALWAYS, NORTH YEMENIS WOULD BE HAPPIER IF US HELP WERE NOT SO CLOSELY TIED TO WHAT THEY REGARD AS THE TURGID PACE OR SAUDI SUPPORT, BUT THEY APPEAR REALISTIC IN ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT WE INTEND TO KEEP THE SAUDIS OUT IN FRONT IN THE TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.)

3. WHAT YAR INTENDS TO DO: DURING MY VISIT RANSOM AND I DID NOT HAVE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS ON THIS POINT, BECAUSE OF NEED TO SET OVERALL TONE OF VISIT WITH PRIME MINISTER GHANI AND ESSENTIALLY FORMAL NATURE OF EXCHANGE WITH COUNCIL CHARMAN ARASHI. FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAJ, WITH WHOM WE HAD INTENDED TO PROBE YAR INTENTIONS FULLY, KEPT BEING DRAGGED OFF TO HIGH PRIORITY TASK OF INVESTIGATING GHASHMI ASSASSINATION IN PREPARATION FOR SATURDAY'S ARAB LEAGUE MEETING, HAVING TO CANCEL THE SCHEDULED MEETING WITH US EVENING JUNE 27 AND HAVING TO SEND WESTERN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AL KIBSI AND AMBASSADOR TO US MUTTAWAKKIL TO SUB-HOSTING LUNCHEON PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE JUNE 28. HE WAS PRESENT ONLY DURING MY MEETING WITH ARASHI AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PENINSULAR PROTOCOL, DID NOT PARTICIPATE INDEPENDENTLY

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IN DISCUSSION, CONFINING HIMSELF TO INTERPRETING. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION, GHANI ADMITTED YAR SEES ONGOING PDRY THREAT PRIMARILY AS ONE OF TERRORISM AND POLITICAL SUBVERSION RATHER THAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN YAR. BOTH HE AND ARASHI EMPHASIZED YAR'S NEED TO DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET THREAT FROM SOUTH YEMEN. BUT NEITHER RANSOM NOR I INTERPRETED ANYTHING THEY OR OTHER YAR OFFICIALS SAID AS SUGGESTING IMMEDIATE POSSIBILITY OF YAR INTERVENTION INTO PDRY. ARASHI ASKED FOR US HELP IN ASSESSING HOW TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT. MY OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT YAR HAS NOT YET FIGURED OUT WHAT TO DO, IS FOCUSING NOW ON THIS WEEKEND'S ARAB LEAGUE MEETING AS FORUM FOR MAKING ITS CASE AGAINST PDRY AND BUILDING SUPPORT FOR WHATEVER ACTION IT MAY DECIDE TO TAKE, AND IN ANY EVENT, WILL LOOK TO SAUDIS FOR ADVICE, SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP IN RESPONDING TO GHASHMI ASSASSINATION. WE MUST BEAR IN MIND, HOWEVER, THE INTENSITY OF THE FEELING AMONG YAR LEADERS THAT THEY MUST DO SOMETHING TO RESPOND TO PDRY, AND WE CANNOT RULE OUT THEIR DOING SOMETHING FOOLISH. RANSOM WILL, OF COURSE, BE PROBING FURTHER ON THIS

QUESTION.

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 JIDDA 4834

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUDERS FROM TWINAM

4. U.S. RESPONSE: YAR LEADERS, DESPITE THEIR
REFERENCE TO "PRACTICAL STEPS" WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE
TO SEE US TAKE IN SUPPORT, OBVIOUSLY FIND SOME
ADVANTAGE AT THIS STAGE IN BEING JUST AS VAGUE ABOUT
THE EXTENT OF U.S. SUPPORT DESIRED AS WAS SAUDI PRINCE
TURKI AL FAISAL WHEN HE CALLED IN AMBASSADOR WEST AND
HIS BRITISH, FRENCH AND IRANIAN COLLEAGUES JUNE 25.
BOTH SAUDIS AND YAR WOULD OBVIOUSLY PREFER AN
OPEN-ENDED COMMITMENT FROM US, AND UNDOUBTEDLY OVER
TIME YAR WILL SEEK TO USE PRESENT SITUATION TO PUSH
US FURTHER INTO MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP THAN
WE HAVE TO DATE DETERMINED TO GO. AT THE MOMENT,
HOWEVER, WE SEEM TO BE IN THE FORTUNATE POSITION OF
HAVING ALREADY AGREED WITH SAUDIS (AND CONGRESS) ON A
YAR MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WHICH HAS HAD AS
YET VIRTUALLY NO TANGIBLE IMPACT. WE ARE AT POINT
WHERE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESENTLY AGREED
PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE TRANSFER OF F-5B'S, IS MATTER
OF URGENCY. IF WE CAN GET OUR ACT TOGETHER WITH
SAUDIS, AN ADMITTEDLY FORMIDABLE TASK, WE SHOULD BE
ABLE OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO TO GO A LONG WAY IN
PROVIDING TANGIBLE MANIFESTATIONS OF OUR POLICY OF
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SUPPORTING YAR IN COOPERATION WITH SAUDI ARAIBA.
AT SAME TIME, BY PRESSING SAUDI LEADERSHIP TO GET
ON WITH IMPLEMENTING THE YAR MILITARY SUPPLY
PROGRAM TO WHICH IT LONG AGO AGREED, WE CAN TO SOME
EXTENT ANSWER THE SAUDI REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT IN
ITS AS YET UNSPECIFIED HELP TO NORTH YEMEN. IN
ADDITION TO INTENSIFYING EFFORTS TO MOVE INFANTRY
MODERNIZATION AND F-5B TRANSFER LONG PROMPTLY AND
EFFECTIVELY, THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE TIME TO GO
AHEAD WITH APPROVAL OF THE F-5E'S FOR NORTH YEMEN.

5. CHARGE RANSOM MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON ABOVE
IMPRESSIONS.

6. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS THIS MESSAGE TO
APPROPRIATE MIDDLE EAST POSTS AND MILITARY
ADDRESSEES, INCLUDING CHUSMTM DHAHRAN.
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